**Romans 12:2**

I. Introductory Comments

A. Notice the centrality of our minds in the Christian life

1. The Christian life is not, first and foremost, about behavior but about our hearts and minds

2. We almost always act out of what we truly believe (not necessarily what we say we believe)

B. Notice the inevitability of our minds being formed by something

1. They are either being “conformed” or “transformed”

2. Consider this past week: what has been forming your mind/ideas/perspectives

II. Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world

A. Literally Paul says, “don’t have the same schematics” as the world

= Don’t have the same mindset/worldview as the world

B. The world’s worldview

1. Romans 1:8-25: They removed the Creator from the center of reality and put creation (and ultimately the self) at the center, and everything else is understood accordingly

2. Their thinking became futile as a result

3. Examples of the world’s worldview

-Truth is determined by the self and is therefore relative and according to personal preference

-The Goal of life is personal happiness, pleasure, fulfillment as I define it

-Money and possessions: one’s life consists in the abundance of one’s possessions. The self is a consumer. Standard of living is everything, and we will make all sorts of sacrifices to improve standard of living. We find satisfaction , security, and significance in what we have materially

-Image is everything: physical attractiveness is golden

-Sex/sexuality is an opportunity for self-expression.

-Marriage exists to make my life happier and more fulfilled

-Time: busier is better

III. Be transformed by the renewing of your minds

A. The most significant moment in transformation happens when become Christians

1. The self is dethroned and God is put in his rightful place at the center of the universe

2. 2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” Everything else makes sense in light of Jesus.

B. But our minds still need constant “renewal”

1. We renew our minds by continuing to fix our minds on Jesus

a. 2 Cor 3:18: The Spirit transforms us as we gaze at Jesus and consider who he is and what he has done

b. Our role, then, is to fix our minds on Jesus

2. Practically speaking, we renew our minds through

a. Bible reading, study, meditation, and memorization

b. Prayer

c. Talking with other Christians (and reading Christian authors)

d. Spending time in God’s creation and considering what we learn about him there

C. The goal of our renewal is to discern God’s will in our lives

1. Probably not referring to God’s specific will for us as individuals, but rather his general moral will for all of us

2. Examples of God’s will and perspective

a. Truth is determined by God and His Word

b. The goal of life is to know and serve God (with happiness and joy as a natural byproduct)

c. Money and Material possessions: We are not consumers but rather stewards who enjoy God’s gifts and use them in service of his kingdom, without finding our ultimate worth and security in them

-Image is nothing; inner character is everything.

-Sex/sexuality is an opportunity to worship God and give ourselves to another in a lifelong committed relationship

-Marriage exists to make us holy and teach us how to love like Jesus

-Time: We are often called to be still and know that God is in control

IV. Conclusion

A. Do you want to renew your mind, and if so what are you willing to change?

1. JP Moreland: If you want to develop a Christian mind, you must intend to order your overall form of life to make this possible . . .Nothing that is worth doing is pleasurable or easy in the early stages of learning how to do it. But through regular practice, patient endurance, and proper mentoring, skills emerge and habits are formed that enable a person to be good at the activity in focus. This is clearly the case in learning to play golf, hit a baseball, or read in completely new areas of study. It is no less true of becoming a deep, careful thinker in general. If we are to love God adequately with the mind, then the mind must be exercised regularly, trained to acquire certain habits of thought, and filled with an increasingly rich set of distinctions and categories.

2. Sports analogy: you must order your life in a particular way if you want to become a great athlete

B. What is one thing you can remove from your life that is forming your mind in unhealthy ways?

-TV, internet, a relationship, etc.

C. What is one thing you can take on that would positively transform/renew your mind?

-Scripture reading, Scripture memorization, a walk in creation, spending time with a person who impacts you positively

**Discussion Questions**

1. On Sunday we talked about the centrality of the mind, and the following comment was made: “We almost always act out of what we truly believe.” Do you think that is true or not?

2. Consider the examples of the world’s mindset in Section II, B, 3 above. Where do you find yourself being conformed to the world’s way of thinking? What other key worldly assumptions/perspectives would you add to that list?

3. Consider the examples of God’s will in Section II, C, 2. Was there anything surprising or inspiring to you in that list that you want to reflect on?

4. As you consider what you are exposing your mind to and how it is shaping your mindset, is there anything that you think God would want you to remove from your life at this time? And is there anything that you think God would want you to add to your life as a way of regularly renewing your mind in His truth? What specifically do you want to do and how can your small group encourage you in that?

5. Consider the JP Moreland quote in the conclusion. What do you think about his perspective there?